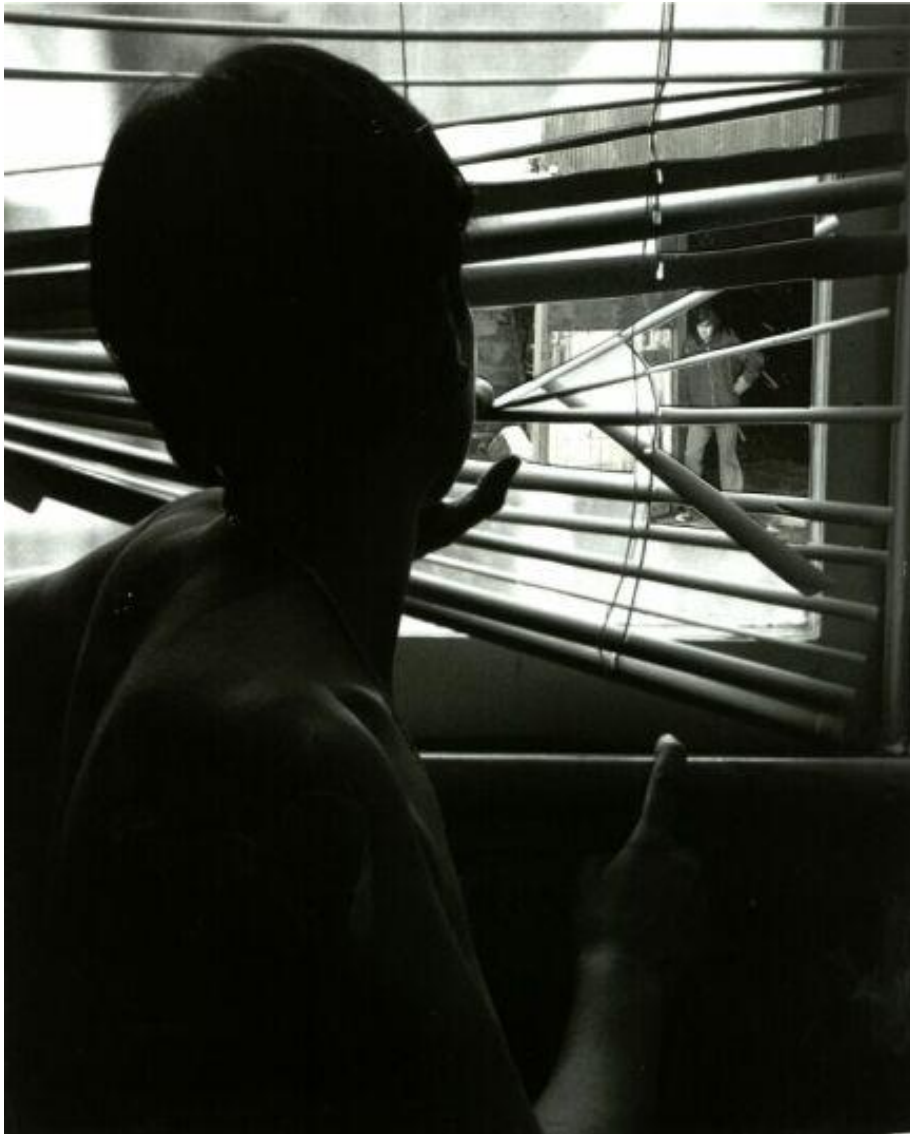


Hoarfrost



Collected Poems: 1994 - 2013
Wayne Scott Ray

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Notre Dame de Chaytor (2008)

(for Elizabeth)

First Kiss

The first passionate kiss,
the one where I could not breathe,
the one where inhale and exhale
meld together, air barely in
and barely out, your kiss
regulating the lungs flow.

The last time I held my breath
was underwater in the ocean,
and now, the ocean of your love
holds me underwater as I hold you.

Ireland

Let's meet for coffee
on Ireland's north shore

where Elfin beasts
and Dragon's feasts
were once tales of lore.

Let's have high tea
along the Newfoundland coast
beneath the briny sea
where salt will ruin toast,
and I will be your King.

The First Real Love Of You

The first real love of you
was the most recent image
I have of your smooth skin,
melding passionately into mine.

The first real love of you
is the warm moist of your body
receptive to a sensitive kiss
as you draw in a hot breath.

The first real love of you
stretched across the bed,
both of us smiling, kissing

in the quiet room, one heart,
is just being with you.

This is the real love of you.

Distant Skin

I heard the water running,
hot showered skin wet
from metal pipes spewing liquid
heaven on your flesh.

Your neck first, down the back,
over your breasts, stomach.
Water flowing round the mound
above your thighs and down past your knees,
your breath soft.

We both imagine the water fingers
on your skin, caressing you all over,
I just sitting and listening, you
standing in the running shower
experiencing the moment and smile.

When I Whispered Your Name

When I whispered your name,
your face was up against the nape
of my neck, hair tousled in my eyes.

Lips exhaled soft wakable breathing,
as your soft hand made the long trek
from my chest hair to circle slowly
around my full moon belly.

Again, I whispered your name
and you slowly roused and pulled
your head away, leaving the warm wet
shadow of your face on my skin
and it was then that I knew my love
was like that fire brand on my neck,
warm and lasting, circular, enigmatic
in that even when we are separated,
we are still very much together.

Biking With You

It's been a long time,
my thoughts about you.
Too long because I think
about you on a regular basis.

My energy and your aura,
aura and your energy,
dreams with no meaning,
dreams unclear, yet . . .
Strands of like and love
intertwine my thoughts and yours.

Today I rode behind you
on my bicycle to protect you
from traffic as you changed gears
and regardless of the struggle
the tires went in one direction
together, rolling on down the street,
four tires, one goal, moving on
for the common end,
together, regardless of the struggle.

Ides Of March

The Ides of March was cold
for Caesar but here, snow melts
on the fifteenth as you sleep.
This winter has been cold.
Often I have slept in the cold.
Often you double quilt in the cold.
This winter has been cold.

Illusion can appear the reality
as reality can be illusion
like last week's bright sun
in the early morning fog, little
penetration in the moist cold, warm, cold.
Not for a long time will there
be a burgundy or turquoise sky
or the smell of lilacs or lilies,
as welcome as the smells
drifting up from your bright apartment
into the winter colored hallway
where we stand to say goodnight.

My tongue, like a knife, pokes
through my lips as I kiss
your neck in the cold doorway.
The warmth of my face melts
the winter your face sometimes feels.
Tongue on skin, lips on lips,
O Great Caesar, you were wrong,
the knife you felt on the Ides
of March brings not death but life.
The heart lives and breathes as
I pull my knife tongue from
your neck and step back inside
not parting, not leaving, not
going home to sleep in the cold.
I step inside and close the door and
see the first flower of spring
burst forth from your eyes.

Your Breath

Your breath soft
as the leaf unfolds in spring,
morning air coaxing open
a beautiful dawn, where

the endless night had you
sleeping beside me.

Today starts with you
dawn becomes day,
your breath now an open leaf
lips the curved edge,
upturned as you inhale.

Where you are in the ether,
your wandering wondering
sleep memory dream state
is no matter as you wake,
as you smile, fingers
reaching out for my shoulder,
eyes open as you realize
you are not alone now.

Your breath ten thousand leaves
drawing in all the room's air,
your lips soft kiss my skin
and I can hear the whole forest exhale.

Working On My Wall

Kissing your lips, to me,
was like caressing your heart
and under normal circumstances
full-body hormonal enthusiasm
would surely have prevailed.

Tiny bricks piled up from your toes
reaching the nether regions of what
should have shown my love for you.
You would have by now noticed
that the wall blocked my ego
from projecting an erectile undercover.

I was only thinking of a kiss,
but your mind was elsewhere, envisioning
that the wall should not have been there.

Then my admissions, truth or dare,
understanding of new enlightened relationships.
I am working on my wall,
it crumbles everyday

you hold my hand
and smile.

This Is The Quiet Of You

This is the quiet of you;
putting on a kettle, all
the lights are on in the heat
and after the boil, on the red
couch in your pajamas sitting
with your left hand extended,
applying burgundy nail polish,

some music in the background,
Beethoven perhaps as the computer
downloads a movie or a song,
TV is muted, ready
to display a game or DVD and
all the lights are flashing red,

your brain is in focus, ridding
itself of the long weeks work,
car problems, Facebook fiascoes
and pleasures, winter weather,
housework done or to do, mystery
chocolates left at your door, lost
friends and no more Grand Marnier.

Two hours pass by and you reach over
to rub your hand where he sat,
remember the old warmth
and reach for the phone.

Valentine's Day 2008

One can dream be the Captain of a ship,
and prepare to set sail for foreign shores,
to firm set upon the wheel of the ship,
out of some known harbor safe from wars.

For every ship there can only one Captain be,
to weigh anchor, set sail and load the hold,
gather stores, weapons for battle at sea,
and in the galley be first with stories of old.

In the evening just before wide sunset,
all is quiet on the decks where day is done,
the Captain, hands upon the wheel are set,
and all aboard remember shore await the morning sun.

Alone he stands and steers through the night,
against a star lit sea, moon above him floats,
just below, ahh just below she lays and is his might,
for without her strength, he is just a man in a boat.

She is the true Captain of his ship,
she lets it float, sink, or sail above,
supports, encourages or shows true grit,
alone she is just the sea, together there is love.

Across time and sailing free,
never alone but together, be,
you with me and I with you,
searching and finding the Isle of View.

My Father

I wish you could have known my father
but death came knocking and it was
long before your door opened
and you met me.

I wish you could have met my father
but as I got older and he got further
away from being able to hold your hand
and tell tales you would have smiled at,
I have only one wish that you could have
met my father.

What a wonderful world to have you
beside me, to have to tell you how
he would have loved you too.
His long arm around your shoulder,
tucked up in a tall tale in front of
a fireplace somewhere, your sweet smile
knowing my father.

In *RopeDancer* 2012 TOPS anthology
Beret Days Press

January

January
holds the moisture,
bed linens double dried
before a deep sleep ensues,
and I find myself at 6am
beside your double bed
gazing out the window.

January temperatures
rise overnight,
snow releases a dense fog
knocking at your window
warming the balcony steel
and the plastic chairs,
and I, thinking I was quiet,
feel you behind me,
hands on the middle
of my bare back, wishing
they too had been
in that bed linen drier.

In *RopeDancer* 2012 TOPS anthology
Beret Days Press

Confessions

Forgive me for I have sinned.
It has been a year since my last poem,
it was not about you though.
It has been eight months since my last kiss,
and that, actually, was yours.
It has been four months since
I held a woman's hand,
and the woman that I see sleeping,
was her, was you.
Reclining under the skylight softly breathing,
I can barely hear the inhale
and exhale of your lungs.
It has been two months since you said I love you
though it was for someone else, but it has
only been two days since I said, I love you.
Yesterday my Purgatory ended with your smile.
Yesterday my Purgatory ended
with your hand in mine.

Forgive me now for I want to sin,
reach over and kiss your dream filled sleep,
reach over and touch your soft beautiful skin,
but we don't have to be beside each other
to be together as one, more than just friends.

So I sit here and watch you sleeping,
having not sinned and wait breathlessly
to be one with you again.

Leda: White Swan (1999)

(for Linda Joy)

Ocean Fury

More than one ocean fury
has this saline tide boiled,
slammed foamed sea and ships
against the coastal red sandstone.

Just beneath the emerald surface
where no winds care to blow
and the azure sky fails to penetrate
the furied foam, lies a stillness.

In this sharks domain, liquid life
between heaven and earth, stalactites
filter out the furies howl and hate,
inside this deep protective cave.

Gaia, Earth Mother, Woman asleep as rock
where ocean tide raises up your skin,
flesh of Poseidon carried in on fury foam
caressing the world you hold so dear.

Your darkness now enlightened, living,
moulded rock and salty skin unite
and soften the cracks and crevasses,
melt and reform the crystal cave, become one.

The ocean tide recedes and quiet reigns
just beneath the emerald surface.
Gaia sleeps, refreshed, reunited again
where only the Gods dare tread.

Where Are You My Love?

Where are you my love, lost in laughter?
The world around you holds its breath,
blue flowers wait to bloom,
the sun hesitates to set unless it too,
has your smile.
Water bursts forth from its fountain
and rainbows reflect your face
in the distance, down the long road from here,
and we know it's you.
Do not feed me bread nor white wine.
Clothe me not nor sandal my feet
on this pebbled road where

my skin might bleed in joy.
I hear your smile, see your laughter.
The day can never end, love,
unless your lips open in hearts voice,
arms outstretched, your hands orchestrate
the birds song, the flowers finally bloom
and the sun sets at your command.
Your laughter ends each day of my life, love,
and wakes the dawn forever,
but today the world stands still
because we know not where you are, love?

Where are you my love?
Lost in laughter somewhere?

In: *Prisoner of Women's Dreams* audio CD
HMS Press 2003

Joy

On the street in front of my house
runs a sidewalk made of clay.
In the hot summer weather
the clay bakes hard and dry.

I sat on the porch surrounded by memories
watching the world pass me by
thinking about the long road home.

You were off in the distance, barefoot
as the sun broke free from the clouds.
I watched you walk towards me
and stop in front of my house.

Something I said made you cry,
nota sadness nor a shadowed cry,
but a phrase that made you wonder why
you had never before passed this way by.

You smiled as the tears met the clay
and from the soft earth, formed a stone
with your tender caring hands,
as your heart carved out a name, Joy.

In: *Prisoner of Women's Dreams* audio CD
HMS Press 2003

River Avon

Come and sit on this bench beside me
in the park along the river Avon
and tell me why we are here
leaning against the rose trellis
counting out the days as the Fall slips in.

What are we supposed to do when it rains
and the earth soaks up the pitter patter
as it falls from the sky beside the river
where the roses have lost their satin sheen.

Come and sit on this bench beside me
in the park along the river Avon
and I shall tell you why we are here
leaning against the rose trellis
as Fall slips in around the stones and the swans.

Friendship should be floating through a dark blue sky,
love more than daily words on folded paper
and happiness a violin playing songs
by Leonard Cohen.

Out here along the river Avon, beside this bench
the last rose bud decides tomorrow to burst forth
remaining closed in our shadow, thinking it is night.

In: *Prisoner of Women's Dreams* audio CD
HMS Press 2003

Sunday Evening : Alone

We'll have poetry my love
but tonight, there is only quiet.
My heart that wanted singing
is of a great sadness ringing.

We'll have a dance my love,
but tonight, there is only quiet.
My arms that wanted hugging
have now only shoulders shrugging.

We'll have a song my love
but tonight, there is only quiet.
All the birds have a silent longing
and I too have a silent singing.

Poetry, dance, and song my love
but there is only quiet, tonight my love.
I long for just a simple thing, my love,
poetry, dance, song and thee, my love

Affirmation

If you believe in yourself.
If you know that I believe in you.
If you know that your friends believe in you.
If you believe in the fate that
told you to write the book
If you believe now is the time
to share and spill forth
the flowers from your brain.
If you believe your children
will support your efforts.
If you know that I love you and support you
If you believe the Serpents Tail
and that not all men are mean.
If you believe you have finished stomping
and crying and can now center yourself
and focus on the truth to be shared.

You are the chosen one . . .

What Pain, Heartache

What pain, heartache
that keeps you in my thoughts
after you have said goodbye.

What is this thing called Love
to be so one sided, or, not listening,
been two sided all along.

Where was I not listening but
staring into your heart looking
to find myself, already there.

Oh my sweet Joy, do we have to let go
the mind that binds my love to yours,
for yours let go long ago, and not.

But every time I see you, kiss
your sweet lips and touch your skin,
I melt back into my comfort zone
and you begin to let down your defences
accept some of my faults and dream of me.

In: *Prisoner of Women's Dreams* audio CD
HMS Press 2003

Dancing

We never did go dancing
where glaciers melt and
angels lightly tread,
where eagle wings separate
clouds from the rising sun.

We never did go dancing
where magnolias stain the air
and lakes are crystal clear,
where a babies feather breath
touches on human skin.

If we had gone dancing,
we would have missed the silence
between us and the first laughter in our smiles.

In: *Prisoner of Women's Dreams* audio CD
HMS Press 2003

I Have A Secret Life

(adapted)

When I arise and dress in this
holy place near the Avon River,
I wonder why the past has clasped
your wrists and bound you to this place?

Goddess, Gaia, you are light
in this temple where you sleep
arms folded across your gentle heart.

At your feet I remain your servant,
yet hold the key to your salvation.
In a dream you see the answer questioned
as I rise from this place where you sleep.

That breeze you feel upon your cheek
my friend, is I, the sound of one hand clapping.

Flower Children

Flowers burst forth from her brain.
Petals manifest themselves
at the nape of her moonlight neck
where her hair hangs on celestial worlds.
Orchids peer out from armpits, smooth
and pale like Delft hyacinths and from
her mouth laughter known to no one
but the morning sun as it beats down,
drying the mist at her naked feet.

Flowers burst forth from her brain.
Magnolia blossoms are round as her breasts
and scented to take the breath away
from the flower children beside her.
Trickle of Poseidon out her navel,
run down her wanting belly onto her
poinsettia petal thighs. She dreams
of love and searches for Gaia, oh
Earth Mother, priestess, angel of my youth,
enter my soul, fill me with your light.

In: *Prisoner of Women's Dreams* audio CD
HMS Press 2003

Gayle Collins (1994)

Tumbling

There is more to fear
in a cradled crescent night
than the thought of promises
being broken by a lover
aching to kiss another.

Dreams, like nightmares,
get caught in the leaves of trees
hidden behind the daylight,
needing to be touched and
shaped by gentle hands
until frost sets them free.

Nightmares, as these dreams
are hiding behind the daylight
fading with dawn's crescent moon,
tumbling to the ground in Fall
where you lay naked under the trees.
The leaves caress your skin,
not sure if this peacefulness
will be broken by a nightmares promise
or a lovers moonlight dream.

A warm October sun
heats up your mushroom skin.
A soft breeze from the South
lifts and separates the leaves
from where they want to stay.

Down. Down. Down.
The last leaf of Fall.
Nightmare tumbling or
dream tumbling,
hiding behind nature's kiss.

Down. Down. Down.
The last leaf of Fall,
upon your wanting belly.
Its hard curved stem alive
in your scented garden.
Perfumed by love.
Moistened by lust.

Which fear will you leave behind
as it enters your womb and
wraps itself around your heart?

Trees of Surprise, BlazeVox Buffalo, New York, 2007

Part of Me

Which part of you wants to stay?
is it sins soft lips
or where my hand shall lay,
is it deep inside your freckled breast
or a beating heart that
has known no rest,
is it in your eyes
or between your thighs?
Which part of you wants to stay?

My feeling is,
and it shall be this,
that moment just before
and just after a kiss.

Hoarfrost

Milkweed pods and golden rod, their
hoarfrost melted by the sunrise
along the gravel road that has seen
many a ravens' midnight wing.
Just leese of the frost and
as far as the eye can see at dawn,
the silhouette of a million pea seeds
hung in their pre-harvest wombs
trail shadows with this day's sun.

So quiet you can hear the wind passing
over the last raven's wings as it
lands, talons crunching the soil
a distance away. Waiting and watching.

The sun breaks into daylight
above a hill, warming the good Earth,
the road less traveled and two
night weary travelers.

Pulling a bent leg to her chest
on the warm hood of the car at roadside
she shades her eyes as the morning light
changes from a cool orange
to a warmer yellow.
She watching her dream lover stride
out into the farmer's field with his heart
in one hand and their future in the other.

He turns toward her and sings his song,
ravens rise in the morning air,
starlings land at her feet, she smiles,
catches his love one word at a time,
closes her eyes for a sunshine second,
breathes deeply to calm pre-dawn fears,
slides off the hood and back inside
travelling the road less travelled, alone.

The note on the small box beside her read:
Come to me my lady white,
just after dawn in early light,
with this ring as a compass we shall start
to rewrite the map of the human heart.

Road dust settled on ravens wings.
Golden rod less golden for a furlong.
Pea pods become corn husks and wheat fields
and the tires of her car headed East for the coast.
The rising sun burning his memory in her tears.

The fear of a forever love is stronger
than the fear of friendship, she thought.
The dust collected on the grass and
the hoarfrost would be the only thing returning.

Joan Mais Canton (2003)

4 am

4am and the street is quiet.
I can't sleep past the crickets call
or the lights of passing cars and
the only thing connecting us
here in the dark and indolent city
is the number on the door. 116.
You forgot to mention synchronicity
over coffee or in passing.
Numbers play a role in our lives
like dice on a green velvet table
your place or mine, the same
except for the street name.

Sleep now woman, sleep
and this e-mail dream enters
your home to kiss you softly
when you awake. I travel to
be with you in cyberspace
if only to share this number
that you already possess.

Corn

After I found out my great
grandfather was a Cherokee
I learned that a symbol,
universal in nature,
defined that southern tribe.

Far distant now I sit
in this small restaurant, staring
out the window at a gray sky
that once graced our ancestors.

This small connection between us,
synchronistic at best, is
pronounced the same no matter
how it is spelled. How, you say?

Maize trop facile, mon ami!
Mais, tu pronounce comme ca.



She Cast No Shadow

Cathy Inculet, Wayne Ray Collaboration Poems
Harmonia Press

the abyss

He had seen her light on
through the window darkly,
each morning after work.
He tried to cross the abyss
of asphalt to her door,
yet felt helpless like snowfall on cedars,
ready to melt.

Why didn't she look out the window just to see
the morning light that paled against his heart.
Again and again he tossed it toward her door,
a snowball getting smaller in a slowly melting roll
across the black and wide sun warming road
until only a tiny snowflake at its core
was left to reach and softly kiss her door.

ode to del

He tipped the waitress
with whom he had been flirting
innocuously, innocently, in well received fun
he lasciviously tucked a two dollar coin
beneath the saucer
feeling its movement
imbuing it with his essence
metal touching cheap crockery
a symbolic molecular contact
that could never be a melding
and in the infinitesimal distance
lay the chasm of the joke
that might jolt her when she cleared the table. .

Cathy Inculet

the sound of your femininity

(dual)

Though some would disagree,
I find the sound of your femininity
soothing, I close my eyes.
Dream precipitation dreams
and know that she is calm again.

Calm! What, me calm?
Precipitating? Can rain sleet and
snow all over you!
Or I can send a soft mist
to embrace you.

True, you can rain in on me,
bathe the conscious unconsciousness but,
the sound of your femininity is soothing
whether your winter of discontent
hides in the brambled forest of your love
or reflects in the still waters.

My femininity is there
for your choosing,
for your asking,
I am glad it soothes you.
Perhaps like a walk in the forest
Perhaps like a cool swim with no clothes on.

Forest of my love?
Oh Come On!
Who are you trying to impress?
My love is not a forest,
It is a single tree which managed to grow
in a single spot of cultured sunshine.

pasta

She fed him pasta
and conversation.
He ate and listened.

Too much at times.
He wrote his thoughts
on the gastronomic and
wanted them published,
so he could become
Mr. Globe & Male.

"Have you finished yet?"
She asked,
watching him lick his fork
of herb and spice tomato sauce.

He was surprised
that she had asked.

Would you like something else
She asked.

He said no, licked his fork,
left an unfinished plate
and sat down to read
the paper.

Yesterday's news.
No matter.
He savoured it as deliciously
as he had his pasta,
and with more interest.

She licked her fingers
but it was only to turn the pages.
She wasn't pretending to read.

"Yes, I was reading,
in my heart leading,
and my friend,
you were patient,
and did not consider
my reading
as superceding
our friendship.

Will you lick your fingers to
turn the pages?
Or will you consider the pages
And the licking
to be indicative to our friendship?
Lick, my friend.
Turn pages.

Cathy Inculet

I rose up from the bottom

1
God Damn it Max!
2
O God the railings missing
3
I love you leave your wife
4
Remember when we recited poetry in the snow
5
In the old house there was a fire, I was scared
6
I love you where are you
7
Climb up and get that wrench out of the tree
8
If you can come in and sign the house papers today, I
10
Mommy - Daddy
11 . . .

I rise up from the bottom of the stairs
crimson eye lid stains on the window sill
and adam/eve pain in my chest
to faintly see the cat at the top still
unmoved, licking her ass as I landed on mine.

I thought sex was just for courting

Really, I thought sex was just for courting,
for poking the pud after a good meal when
the flowers you gave her were in her eyes,
and your mind just wasn't on the wedding
but wedged in the dark moist of her thighs.

Really, I thought sex was just for courting,
it's been so long I wondered why she wept,
and how she wanted to keep it up all night
when I could have slept and the making
of marriage would do things up all right.

She's replaced me with the spices of the East
and oiled her body to be a culinary delight.
Her cucumber legs and creamy yogurt thighs
on a pita bread bum can be quite a feast
but I prefer to work like all the macho guys.

I tried to show her who the boss should be,
that she should show more respect for me,
but she fell on my fist and now I'm sulking
because I thought sex was just for courting.

her house needed dusting

(dual)

Generally, she considered the
mail, to be unimportant.
Less important than her chairs anyway,

but at least the floors were polished
and the house was landscaped.

But her house needed dusting
and her mail needed dusting,
in that indescribable way
of frustrating things.

Dusting is such a waste of time, she said,
like getting the mail everyday.

Was the potted plant too green
or the thoughts of dusting overblown?
Who wanted to move the bicycle, anyway?

Darn it all, even the plants are dusty.
Dusting plants? Don't we have anything
better to do?
The bicycle is my business.
Yes, it's dusty.
None of your business.

Why is the cat the only one
in the house that can scratch its back?
I could if I tried but the Venetian
blinds are open to the neighbors.

Okay, so I will close the blinds.
They're pretty dusty anyway,
and I will try to lick my back . . .
Just Did It!
You Missed It!
Too Late!
Too bad!

Were you not paying attention?
To the mail and chairs and the dust
and me?

The mail is delivered.
The chairs sat upon.

The dust scattered,
and I am all of that.

Rooms and rafters, kitchen sink,
Oh God, I forgot about the tiles,
and the empty fish tank.
Screw the dust and put the lid down!
Shuffle, shuffle. Room to room.
Trees on the lawn, grass is green,
so are the walls, golden mailbox,
Golden shower to wash the dust.

Save the grapes!
Yes, yes, I'll feed the fish.
They yell at me.
You don't need me.

Cat drinks the guppies' water
and not the guppies themselves.
Survival of the fattest, but
my weight loss has my pants
falling down, scuffing dust.
No belt, no mail, no more grapes.

My cat drinks the fish water.
Do you have a problem with that?

If you don't want
dust
on your cuffs
next time, bring a mop!

Sorry,
I didn't mean to say that.
You brought your friendship
and that was more than enough,
more than receiving mail,
much better than dust.

I will give you string
to hold up your pants,
my friend.
I will buy you a belt
if that is what you need.
As for the grapes,
they are fungible things.
I can get some more.
Be content my friend,

in grapes and love.

Grapes and Love?!

All the while, I've sat on the stairs
and observed your eating habits,
cleaning habits . . . but love?

Place a grape in your naval,
I will eat it.
Show me your vine and I will
make wine, but love?

Dust that off and your mail box
will be full, maybe I don't need
a belt to love your dust,
your fish. Feel my shadow!
Bring me my wine! . . . and the mail!

Place a grape
upon my chair
my love.

I checked my mail
and there was no letter from you.
My cat looked at me,
askance.
I just needed communication
from someone
from you
from a potted plant
from my cat
from a fish.

I placed a grape on my chair,
next to an unopened letter.
Stairs are funny things,
they assaulted me once
or maybe it was caused by the cat,
no matter.
A shadow being cast
when one goes up and down
the stairs.

If no shadow was cast,
then did I not go up,
or down, or was sunlight
the only factor, on my back
or in my eyes.

Blinded by the thought of high noon?

Nah, they were Venetian blinds,
slats of light.
No high noon here.
Today anyway.
To someone who used to live here.

I sat and looked at them
My cat looked at me.
I don't think the fish cared.

Used to live here? I live here still!
Among the dust and the clutter
or your grapevine heart.
Place the cat on your lap, listen
to the soft rhythm of the fish tank.
Close your eyes and feel
my empathetic love, my letters
are written on the dust hanging in the air.

When you move from room to room,
I speak to you, I can be read
on everything if you just open your heart.
Sleep and my letters settle on your eye's.
I touch your skin, taste your sweet wine.

Save the grapes!

two jim

In all the world he did not know
how to say I love you
to the ones that mattered the most.
No,
It wasn't that he didn't know how to say it,
it was that he did not know how to say it so
that they would understand.

In all the world she did know
how to say I love you
to the ones that mattered the most.
It wasn't that she knew how to say it,
it was that they did not know it
when she smiled and her lips didn't move.

But he said it anyway
to the still lips that screamed I love you.
Eyes were opaque
and they became two mouths talking.
Drum and anvil poised, unused.

I love you.
Doesn't matter.
Wait come back,
I wanted to . . .
I wanted to . . .
Never mind

They pulled away from the mirrors, speaking
thoughts intermingled in time/space
simultaneous hearts bleeding until
in person he read her lips, understanding.

She heard his voice vaguely, understanding
and they stood there
wanting to hold hands
both too shy to go first,
lost in the barrens of closeness.

I love you he thought.
I love you she thought.
She smiled, he was looking at her hands.

He could not raise his eyes
Try as he might
To look at her eyes

He got to her mouth
Back to her hands
Hands mouth hands
Damn it why wouldn't she look at him

And then he knew
She didn't need to

twelve steps

Drinking makes me relax
and the night sky's
moon shadow every addict smile
will fade one day soon.

Drinking, pull that moon shadow
off my shoulders, relax
my stars, my no sun day
or all night moon shine.

Only twelve steps to sunlight,
a day I've not seen
in a life time of
drinking. Shall I relax?
One more time . . .
One more Time.

unfinished poem

One day more.
If you would hold me
One day more
and do not judge me
or ask me
what for.

Before, I just felt
comfortable.
Now I just feel naked
when chatter
interferes with my fantasies.

Are you naked yet?
I'm lying here and
gyrating with the
overhead fan blowing
a cool breeze
toward my lungs.

Cathy Inculet

the underbelly of life

Seeing you in a night shirt
that hides the underbelly of life
as if the dark side of jeans
was not enough to inspire warmth,
standing half-naked in the shadows
of my imagination I kneel down
and kiss the smile that no one sees

wrenchly on elias

There are new roots
in my yard from the
not yet a tree, tree.

What life force guides these tendons
into the rooms when the
new skin of wood clings
to the walls. Leaves become
painted onto the lattice skeleton
as the not yet a tree, tree
comes alive.

From the outside of the house
a light is seen while the flowers
bloom near the stairs, filling
the upper rooms with life.
The not yet a tree, tree
grows through me.

Ann Owl (2001)

Haiku by Ann Owl

Your souls mouth drinks skin
sprinkled with salt and freckles,
brushed by peppered hair

When we awake,
we brush away soft silver
tendrils of sleep

Haiku for Ann Owl

Searching for candles
you circle each empty hole,
Menorah

the owls
are not what they seem
praying for prey

New Year's morning
and the first ray of light
snowy owl snowfall

If I had a pen
I would write a haiku
about this moment

We are asleep
far away from each other,
siamese dreams

When we awake,
we brush away soft silver
tendrils of sleep

Joge Ute Haiku:

For eight days
the owl is sleepless
Hanukkah

Kissing the warm moist
just below your heart
where the salt collects,
your eyes follow the lines
across the ceiling as the lids
close slowly over them.
Swallowing the warm moist
of your sweet love
you become part of me.
Your arching back slowly
obscures the face as
you smile, calling my name.

The owl calls
from her protected nest.
Oh, a morning dove!

Are You Jewish?

Menorah in hand, you smile,
soft fingers caress the brass,
circle each empty hole
searching for the candles.
Other than a few close friends
and circumcision, that's the
closest I've been to being Jewish.

This menorah balanced in your hand
was willed to me after the death
of a friend of my father.
A tailor by trade,
found sitting in his easy-chair,
cigarette ashes piled on the rug
burnt out for three days,
exactly one year after his wife had died.

The way your face lit up
when you asked me "Are you Jewish?"
as you touched the menorah again
with your finger tips.
What did you expect to find?
A kindred spirit,
a religious experience,
the Torah on my bookshelf?

Well my raven-haired friend,
when I answered no,
your soul's candle lost the flame
that would keep this menorah burning
into the next millennium or
flood the Guff with its light
and this Goy regrets the day
he was born a Christian.

Something Was Missing

I woke up this morning
and something was missing.
Last night I had a dream
and in the dream the faces
were not clear but the strength
and affection was there
like a familiar and recently
lost hug and kiss I knew too well
to not say I really miss you
and you did not say to
expect too much
but what am I to do,
falling in love with you.

In My Room

Nothing is the same in my room.
When you step across the threshold
with bedroom eyes, it's not for the bed.
You stare everywhere; walls, desk, floor,
"That wasn't there last week?" "What's that?"
"Those photos have moved, paintings replaced?"

When you walk further into my domain,
memories of a hugable love fade and you
forget to say "Give me some sugar - baby!",
Looking for that sweet moist kiss. All you see
is maybe your name on a sheet of yellow paper.
My diary near your fingertips - you reach out.
I follow you in - your hand pulls back.
Two silhouettes stare down where once stood
photos of a mutual friend, half-naked and hidden
somewhere else in the menagerie of this room.

I see you looking at my possessions.
Fingertips lightly touch the book titles
on the new black shelves.

My fingertips on the nape of your neck now.
Your deep thinking eyes close on my room
and all you see is an image of me
lifting you up in my strength filled arms,
pull you into my chest and when I kiss you
the mystery of your enigmatic smile melts
and we are the same, in my room.

The Ocean Of My Room

Like a wave on the beach
in the ocean of my room
you come crashing against
the rocks and sandbars
on the long coastline
of my mellow shaped body.

Sweeping the headwaters
as you recede and reshape
the shoreline with your tongue,
you reunite the waters last
recession with a newer one
and the old coastline
is youthful and new again.

Pudenda

Oh sweet pudenda
how moist the freshness is
forested lingering
in rooms akin to heaven.

Oh sweet sweet vine
wrapped around the hearth
and Bartholin bowl
of your warm moist skin.

Oh sweet blindness
I see yet I see not
reunite Pangea
ignite the word
numeohorekakeo
numeohorekakeo
numeohorekakeo

Ommmmmmmmmmmmmmmmmmmm

Warm Moist

With my arms enveloping you
head against the neck nape
my tongue stretches down your back
curves under the warm moist and into
your womb hearth as you breath in
and exhale into my cloudy day hair.

Why?

What is the threshold in your life,
whereby the line is crossed between
friendship, love, affection, and truth?

When does a kiss kindle embers
that fires are born from after
the heat warms up your lips?

How strong is the wall that holds
trust and mistrust apart as you
close your eyes and open your heart?

Where do your dreams lead your hand
when I am not there to guide your
fingertips at night when you are alone?

Why don't we . . . ?

Shhhh . . . Why not?

When you Go

Did you know that when you go,
when you leave me, depart from me,
board a bus or plane without me,
walk down the sidewalk after I've gone,
close the door, say goodnight, goodbye,
drive away in your car along life's highway . . .

You are still there beside me.

Your sword

I like your sword.
I just have an Epee. I've
encountered the occasional
foil and dagger, but I am overwhelmed
by your Samurai blade.

En guard.
Thrust.
En guard, thrust, thrust.
En guard . . . Oh God!
Thrust.

Your Warmth

There is something alien about your warmth.
Claws embed on pre-carrion flesh
splayed upon the quilted bed,

There is something about your warmth,
feline eyes find their way in umbric light,
lips hot with circumcised sweat.

You draw first blood in the vacuum
of your mouth, inside soft hot cheek skin,
flagellate tongue and phallic obelisk of love,
nails & nipples, teeth & skin, sweat & hair, and
there is something alien about your warmth

Going down Goose Lane Toward Broken Jaw:

Harmonia Press 2005

Poetry written in 2002 & 2003

Dedication:

for jones upon learning of his suicide:

in a dream
they become one
moth and flame

Dedicated also to my old friend Joe Blades [Broken Jaw Press], who lived down the street from me when I was there; Mia, Claudette, and all my new friends and my workmates on the afternoon shift at 203 Waggoners Lane, Canada Post, Fredericton, New Brunswick.

And for Pat Carlson who wrote many poems used in this collection

“You said hello with goodbye on your lips”

Haiku from In A Dream:

Serving Chai
in the once empty room
the warmth of you

Stirring noodles
over the hot oven fire
sipping tea

Sipping on Green Tea
across from 'Old Loyalist Cemetery'
long before Vimy

Fresh coffee
after love settles the air
aroma

If I had a pen
I would write a haiku
about this moment

Outside Tobique
Nation Drumming Circle
Japanese tourist

Cora's: At The Window, Behind The Pane
(for stephanie)

behind the counter,
behind the coffee, eggs,
scurrying to and fro, tea,
customers' orders, ins
and outs, lights, noise,
cash register jingling,

I catch a glimpse
of you dreaming, lost
in another world, not
the one that inhabits
this queen street restaurant

where are you my friend
lost in laughter, somewhere?

Going Home

Sitting here drinking Green Tea,
listening to Enya on the radio
and thinking of this crisp cold day.
One of the many leafless Fall days
when the grey squirrels are
the only living beings around.

The blue sky hangs on branches
across the street at Old Loyalist Cemetery
where Boer War soldiers and
early settlers remember summer.
Their ghosts covered with Fall colors
as they hibernate for oncoming Winter.

Green Tea warms the body so.
Pushes the sweat out of my pores.
I should be off to the Saturday Market
instead of sipping from this large cup
in this quiet New Brunswick apartment.

Really, I should be out on the highway
and on that silver bird from here
but the soft sounds of Enya, pull me
back to this warm cup of tea,
pack my suitcase and leave.

Cynthia Bachelor

As I was leaving London,
two days before the silver wing flight,
I wandered through the mall
and saw you standing there.
Sleek glass counter ending
at your elegant dressed body,
golden hair accenting the beauty of you.
The room was quiet, and you
were thinking of something
or just reading, I don't know
but there was such a serenity
in that moment that my intrusion
to say goodbye would have ruined
the photography of you.

Now, I think I should have stayed.
Instead, I stood and waved
but I will always remember your face
and your ever created grace.

Are You Afraid to Die?

(for Linda Ham)

I sit at work tonight
among the postal sort cases and
wonder if the question should have been,
“am I afraid to live?”

To Live: to create, to enjoy, to be oneself,
to be proud of creating and of just being.

At home I sit and type.
Typing well worn and often unreadable handwriting.
Creativity and life,
creativity and living, but what
am I afraid of, if I am indeed afraid?

Being here alone is not
as nice as walking across the street
with someone you love or sharing things
in a moving car. Dinner for two.
There are memories out there.

Now I just think of coming home, I
just need to be there
after five months in this forested province,
homesick for friends.

What If... You Walk by Me

(Written by Heather Leahy)

What if ... you walk by me
your eyes teased by another
could I approach you from behind
with the same intensity?

What if ... I lower my head
would you see eyes teasing yours,
top of head would not say the same thing.

What if... I see a weak smile, followed by
groping for something to say, my words
sounding hollow in my head.

What if... all you see is someone in the
distance and your eyes say
you wish it were me.

The Bed Creaks From My Weight... Alone

(Written by Heather Leahy)

The bed creaks from my weight ... alone,
Another word has caressed my soul,
My feet get cold, my hands sweat,
Another word finds its mark.

A pause, silence steals time,
Another word could caress my soul,
I breathe in ... waiting.
Powerful, caressed by each word.

Does he know that the pen
is mightier than the sword?
I move just enough to breathe
No sound escapes from the pause.

Words have failed me again.
In time will words be actions?
Take me in your arms.
Let actions replace the words.

The bed creaks from the weight.
A pause ... to steal time,
let it be actions not words
that caress my soul.

Between Sips of White Wine

(For Lilli Ferguson and Joe Blades)

On Valentine's Day,
between sips of white wine
that can reveal too much
of my life at times,
I enjoy the company of friends
and think about the ocean,
waves that pushed my life
from the Pacific coastal waters
to splash upon my Grandparent's
Atlantic Fundy shores.

On Valentine's Day,
at this table set for three,
a blood-red, two-tiered cake
covered in flowers, waits the knife.

A sip of wine, a poet's words,
a smile, and thoughts of home
as my new friend reaches out
slices cake at each pink flower,
and we dissolve the petals
on our tongues and go home alone.

In a Dream

In a dream, climbing brick steps
with their talus slope of chips,
I carry an old Penny-farthing,
my feet slip on the way up and
the bicycle drops to the ground.

Now, the wall is gone and I
descend the narrow bricked angle
to the bottom, sliding, slipping
into a high-ceilinged basement.
Brick steps now a crumbling chimney.

I am covered in dust, head to foot
with my 1994 journal in my left hand
open to a blank page in May
with only one penned entry:

*where is the here and now?,
the why and when of my journey?
Where did the wind blow my friends?
Where is the lost spirit that
inhabits the mortal soul? . . .*

the perpetual unanswered question.

Whippitt Lounge

At the tavern on a Friday night
(if you can remember the tavern,
or the night for that matter),
dancing with your shoes off, amongst
the college kids, girating and groping
one other as if it were they, who
had discovered darkness and rhythm.
Your middle-aged eyes closed a moment,
expanding a college memory of your own,
running naked on the beach, or
breathing in your first kiss long ago.

Beer sloshing in your brain, sweat,
smoke, muscles, breasts, ashtrays,
and you lean back in your chair,
wake up in your own bed, alone,
call your best friend at noon
on the Saturday to find out why
your pockets are empty and your car
is parked safe but sideways
in the driveway after that Friday night.

Ann Valavaara

This April winter has me bewildered.
Sleet rain and the trees are ice-laden,
falling down around town, chainsaws
reflected in the glassy branches.

When the noises of the city cease
and you close your eyes, let the cold wind
pink your cheeks, you can hear the
crack, crack, crack of the ice on wood.

This April winter has me remembering
a high school sweetheart, midwinter
freezing rain, near midnight and the city
under two inches of glass. Crunched walking
the sidewalk under near breaking wires
and trees. Walking her home, hand in hand,
first kiss beneath a frozen moon.

The Stain on The Road

Several neighbors gathered
around my car today
under the moist grey clouds,
as I leaned against the door.
The stain on the asphalt
fresh, wet, ran uphill and
someone asked how it was to be,
that road stain near the motor,
near the tire, near my car.

Well, I said, staring down,
pointing across the street
to where I had earlier carried
her milch-filled body;

Well, I said:
"Once upon a time
there were three little kittens
and a mother and a van.
Now there are only
three little kittens.
Everyone else is gone."

Banting Building U of T

Along the stone wall, Banting
Building, beside the street car tracks,
Prince Charles and Princess Diana
immortalized for almost a decade
in dark paint printed in huge
letters, criticizing either the marriage
or the divorce.
Prince Charles' opinion would be
in opposition to Diana's on the present graffiti,
replacing years of power washing
the old one, to become a clean wall.
Charles would uphold the present
British government's stand on
the crisis in the Middle East but I
can see Diana's fist in the air,
smiling to the television and yelling
"Stop the war in Iraq!" long after
someone had written "Stuff the wedding!"

Sam

when at first we see
things of no mere mediocrity
and the void is filled from within
where once stood no thought of sin
and the eyes come close to light
and arms come down from heights
to wrap around you in the night
and ghosts of good lovers hover near
to comfort you from fear
and wake you from morning sleep
where once alone, now never weep

Not Looking to Be Protected From Liking You

(For Sam K)

Not looking to be protected from liking you.
No need to guard the house from your heart.
Nor build a fence around my soul and skin.
No more protection from liking you, looking
for the lost key you just found in my mailbox.
I had been reading the letters backward and
the mail man was always coming to the door
slipping nothings through the slot until
I found you tearing down the heart wall to my house.

My Dear Friend
(after a poem for her)

My dear friend -

you write words inspired
by a moment shared,
what then could I ask,
if a lifetime be bared?
A minute in passing
were we allowed to partake,
but thoughts that lingered,
now we have to forsake.
Worlds apart,
I hesitated to explain,
for in doing so
I sweetened the pain.

Understand my friend -

I too share those dreams
you write of in sensuous rhyme;
arms that wrap around me each night,
I pray I will feel in time.
Yet reading once more the words on the page,
I tarry over a line that was penned
and cannot fathom the thoughts clouding your mind,
when 'ghosts of lovers' you did send.
For if you knew these demons
that keep me from you,
you'd have erased writing of such sorrow
and left with thoughts of *comforting me from fear,*
and *where once alone, now never weep,* to follow.
So my dear friend -

I bid you good-bye, memories etched of that day
yearning to spend many more of the same,
and if, God willing, you should wander back here,
you'll find the window lit with a flame.
And I am asking you, please be patient for now
and see what destiny brings us in time,
and if ever you write words inspired by us,
please leave all my skeletons behind.

Sam K. /03

Sego Road

(For Maryanne Sego)

I miss you he said
to the open road, where
you were not there in
the seat beside me.
Hand extended to hold
a memory of you.
Driving the highway home
to the door of your heart.

Friendship Highway 101,
two lanes, both directions
but the signs are blurred
on the other side,
on mine, clear as sky, signs
with your name and the
remaining mileage to your door.

Stopping periodically for gas.

**You Cannot Give a Heart
That Has Been Taken...**

*(online collaboration poem with
Maryanne Sego: for Harry Gatley)*

you cannot give a heart that has been taken ...
a thief crept quietly into the night ...
what I'm left with is merely part of who i am ...
an open cage empty with the weight of tears
for one last kiss...one fleeting moment to kiss ...
or a moment before the lips part
and the eyes open on memory
how loudly the silence pounds
echoing through a darkness that never lingers
just remember to breathe my heart silently sings
and that is all that remains
the shadow of love, the setting sun,
waning moon gathering shadows about you
to keep you warm at night
from the people you call friends
the drums of singers ...wails the longing ...
skin of hand, touch of soul, breath of breast
each time he hits the skin ...the echoes of a hollowness.
trying to find a way to fill the void ...
the universe echoes and the void is too great
hit the skin, hit the skin again hear me
oh God listen to my cry
cause there is nothing left behind that skin,
to hurt no more ...
beaten down ... and torn ... bleeding ...
there are no gods...
merely words ... formed by man...
worn by women on threaded hearts
to provide a false fortitude ...to be a lie
my gardens are filled with roses, and
black-eyed susans...
Susan's petal's falling down around her ankles ...
thorns long ago tearing at the flesh,
skin of my love
the winds blow from across the bay ...thrashing her.
blows hard and cold on this sun filled day
burning memory on my breast
just needs a bit of water is what
the neighbours say
wear the ragged shirt outside ... let them see ...
let them see what he has done to me ...
ragged shirt
torn and bleeding ...my lips locked shut ...

i cannot speak..
damn you all ... cant you see ...
but I continue to beat the skin
cause the sound is not heard
watch the rose flowers continue to fall
petals ... of bleeding red ... purple and blue
under the cedar tree the swing that was made ...
swings back and forth ... with no one inside ...
and the cedars are bereft of bird song
save the swing creaking in the wind
no noise now, now love, no heart sound
save the beating of the skin
only flower petals gathering the dew in early morn
beating skin, beat in skin beat and the neighbours
walking by as they always do every morn
yes ... take this skin and toughen me like leather ...
rip off the shirt and beat my breasts hard
neighbours know not my pain my deep
deep refrain this song of the void ... his song
I am but a mandrake ... to you ... a woman
you tell what to do...
lost in the cow towing of generations of obedience
and you do not see this, this self serving
the flowers bloom only for you there is no we
the wind blows only to cool your brow
I've asked you to set me free .. .
but you say you love me
black-eyed lazy susan's drop
their seeds to the ground
and you as the bright light in my life
leave a sunburn on my heart
quietly ... silently ... the rains fall
and wash them down
quiet, silent, falling like a veil
like my memories ... seeping ...
I take off the ragged shirt
since others don't see ...
they continue to gather their seeds
for the next spring..
they pack up their cars ... their belongings..
head back to the city ... a
nd the doors are not locked
and my womb lies barren
for your seed falls on other soil
fertilizes the other grass,
not in this garden of life.

Mother's Day 2003 For Cris 25/12/78

Waiting for the spring rains
to clear the last of the snow,
and make way for the summer
this day is so cloudy cold.

Sipping Irish Cream at Second Cup
across the wet street from Goose Lane Editions,
thinking about younger brother born
half a century ago, this Mother's Day.

Not here to enjoy the East coast sun
or this heavy cleansing precipitation
or a loving Mother who remembers
what this day is really for; you and me.

If I close my eyes I see two boys
in an East Coast memory, running
home for lunch, from the beach
where she will always call our names.

Every 13,000 Years

The day the Earth listened
to her own heartbeat sleep,
all too rhythmic shorelines pulse,
river veins fed ocean tide.

The day the Earth listened
to her labored sky-filled breathing,
village and city scarred skin and
to the endless grains of Human sand,
an ulcer burned in her molten mantle:
 steamed breath crept up
 air rose in Eros
 geysers melted glaciers
 ocean filled river beds and more
 tectonic plates shifted to form new skin.

The day the Earth listened
to her own heartbeat sleep,
the grains of Human sand become one
with the veins of ocean tide,
her redesigned skin,
wet with the wealth of water
absorbed their pulse of history with Hers.

The day the Earth was listening,
She shifted on her axis, exchanging Poles
in her symbiotic journey around Mother Sun.

Narcoleptic Somnambulist

At the edge of the yard where she
fell asleep standing in the sun,
the Trumpet Vine crawled up
her shoes and crept around her ankles
gently making its way up both her legs
in the hot summer sun and twisted across
her thighs, Trumpet Vine bloom
just below her navel. Orange blossoms.
No Fairies here, no dancing, just joy
and soft breathing narcoleptic things,
as the vine slid around her breasts
from where a bead of sweat softly fell.
She smiled in her dreams, felt his arms
around her body and as the vine
inched and inched upward she thought,
what a gentle kiss upon my neck,
as she became covered in blossoms,
he whispered "isle of view" in her ear.
She began to wake and thought of walking.
The Trumpet Vine eased off her skin
and slid to her feet as she only saw
the hose in her hand and water
flooding the garden as the Earth listened.

Unlocking The Muse, Beret Days Press, 2005

Wiccan Wedding

(Carol) (later for Sandy & Mardy)

Upon wakening, ivory-handled dagger
placed silver edge near my heart.
Five bronze double-edged daggers
random placement: arms, legs, tummy, breast.
I see you through the thin veil placed
across my sleep encrusted eyes, cloaked
in a crimson gown I had not seen before.
My hands are not tied but I cannot move.
You are holding a sword and reading
words I don't understand or recognize.
Oh to be a dream or in a dream,
to be a shadow on the ceiling more than this!
Secrets unfolding in the morning air,
but your eyes are calm and I feel more trust
than the thrust of a dagger conjured up
in my waking wondering wandering mind.
Then I see the candles placed around the bed
and the white flowers draped in pearls,
you, holding out the two silver rings,
the ceiling light forming a halo around
your head and now I remember saying "I do."

His Words Don Wings

(after a poem for her)

His words don wings;
flights started with a flutter of sorrow,
end with a quivering touch
a touch too deep for even his own imagination
to mine from the belly of text.

He answers his own questions of misgivings
about love gone awry through his poems
of angst and pain,
a pain shielded only by his armour
of paper and Montblanc Sword.

He pens of places he has yet to visit
and thoughts he has yet to form;
a hereafter cast of memories -
memories of what was and will be again,
time after page.

He sits alone and reads his words,
blurring the dots above the i's;
this is his life as it was once before -

before he touched the pain
of a memory.

Sam K/ 03

Dante's Sister

(for Marie Alighieri aka Charlene Elsbey Coe)

As I slowly turn to stone
Since for me you are gone
My heart shall be the last
To become this icy glass
Lips once warm will slowly die
Never again a you and I
But through my eyes you may see
A memory once of you and me.

Photo poem Wikimedia Commons

Romeo & Juliet: prick of the dagger

(For Sam's knife collection)

Pray tell thy dagger sting
shall stay thy sheath and harbor well.
A dagger sheathed is only for show,
A dagger unsheathed is the dagger I know.
Embedded just below the skin,
save the thrust of sin,
a dagger blade is sure to shine,
and yet the thrust is so sublime
so as to hide the tears of blood
and rub the skin such,
as a dagger blade slides so close
to touch but not tear thy lust,
and as she lay, the dagger hidden,
a sword she dreams
but dreams are forbidden,
his blade inserted in her sheath,
blooded together two and as one,
red heart's liquid drains their sun.
She ran her blade down his back
and there upon the skin attack.
Blood red track, two blades front and back,
silvered handled sheath and all
and as she fell so did he fall,
embedding daggers one and all
and in the ecstasy of death
did she see his blade
in her hearts forever shade.
Be sweet death and life once sown
for daggers deep they have known
And sleep in quiet peace, together sewn.

Goodbye on Your Lips

(Written by Pat Carlson)

You said hello with goodbye on your lips.
Reaching out from inside your sparsely furnished room,
Your heart in search of someone,
Your life's direction neglected.

Reaching out, the universe responding ,
I find the "poet guy,"
who is my shadow.
Recognizing my needs; to touch, to be touch,
to talk, to listen, to share, to feel.

Is it safe for two people to be together,
who fall in love so easily?
You with your cave dwelling ways
and me with the world to save.

Problem solver and procrastinator, dare they mix?
I ask the question knowing full well,
the answer leads to tears.

At that moment,
Yet to come,
When goodbye must be said,
Will you also cry with me?

I think so.

A Whisper on The Wind

*Hearing about my missing friend,
and Wayne leaving.*

(Written by Pat Carlson)

Hearing your voice,
a whisper on the wind,
angels breathing softly
in my ear.

Dreams, reality missing
consciousness lapsing
fate or faith restoring,
replacing,
remaking,
resounding.

When last I heard your voice,
I gasped and have not yet taken
a new breath.

(The Sequel)

Upon Parting

(Written by Pat Carlson)

Will you remember me,
When Fall touches down in London?
Will your lips remember the touch and feel of our kiss,
when last you wanted me?

Linger here a little longer,
while fire burns in your loins,
and you reach out for me with passion,
not regret.

Touch me with your soft strength,
that I may remember your embrace,
that hot, summer day in June.

Kiss me now, not with goodbye on your lips,
as you once did.
But, instead, with disappointment in your leaving.

Temporary Lovers

(Written by Pat Carlson)

Awakening I did not want you gone,
Fall was months away,
and I could enjoy you 'til then.

Suddenly, your news arrived.
Tomorrow became today,
future became present.
Yet, I am not ready to say goodbye.

Will you be my lover,
ere you go?
The door just opened remains ajar.
The heart awaits on hinges.

Dustless Road

(for Pat Carlson)

Down the wet and dustless road,
came a stranger dancing so,
wanting to let his burden go,
stopped but once to lighten his load.

On a path which led not far,
from dustless road to garden shed,
he was in want to lay his head,
and gaze by evening upon a star.

Wondering about the life he had,
always dancing to hide the sad,
the smiles that wash away the mad,
dustless roads that made him glad.

The birds were chirping in the air,
dragon flies feeding up above,
robins thinking of only love,
the stranger woke without a care.

To find a lady beside his bed,
morning sun reflecting in her hair,
wild roses 'round them everywhere,
and he knew why here, he had been led.

The Chess Board of Life

(Written by Pat Carlson)

The Chess Board,
temporarily positioned
anticipating the next move.
In stillness it awaits
the challenge,
the game.

Your move, you retreat
as London calls,
no castling allowed.

Each player takes its turn,
as one by one the game succumbs
to the insights of the mind.
Leaving no chance for winners
as the King surrenders,
to his past.

(Wayne is moving in 5 days)

Locust

(for Marie Alighieri aka Charlene Elsby Coe)

When he found her, barely breathing,
bound to the trunk of the Black Locust,
he pulled her spine pricked body down
to rest on the green green grass, red
blood seeping slowly from her white skin.

On her back, on the ground, breathing.
He slowly laid her down, breathing,
and wondered how and when and why.
The blue sky will tell no secrets,
the wind listens but has blown by.
Rocks and trees absorb words but he
could not see past blood stained skin, and wept.

This hard pain, locust needle pricking,
willows weeping, pines pining, spruce
gum forming amber while Dawn Redwood
gave up her branches to heal the wounds.

He placed her on her back, on the grass
and laid the redwood branches to cover
her skin and pain and watched in quiet awe
as they absorbed the red blood and stains.

And though she was alive and free
of the locusts' barbed black kiss,
she awoke under the star filled sky,
coils of rope still tied to her wrists.

Trees of Surprise, BlazeVox Buffalo, New York, 2007

Unlocking The Muse, Beret Days Press, 2005

Van Gogh's Ear V. 5 French Connection Press, Paris, France/Detroit, USA 2006

Talking to Friends

(For Samantha Squire)

Too many months you've felt alone
even with the noise of so-called friends
pulling you from near to far.

Too many months you've felt alone
in a crowded chat room, names
confused by software & hard drives.

Too many months you've faced alone
the monitor screen, keyboard, cam,
passing up the clear blue sky.

If you took the time to close off
and see the reflection in front of you
you would see me just behind the chair,
hand reaching out for your shoulder.

Room Mates: Samantha & Jen S.

Sitting in the Community Health Clinic
between unrelated drug-induced
conversations, crack cocaine and
long-term tardive dyskinesia & schizophrenia,
trying to outdo each other amongst
the alcoholics, deviants and the all
too busy Public Health Nurses, I wait
patiently for two hours just to be a friend.

I was thinking of you and your
calm face, standing patiently as well,
right hand stirring the slow pasta,
awaiting my return, late for lunch.

George!

Poets For Peace

What is it you saw or didn't see
when you walked into that country,
blinded by glory
the ins and outs
lights and oil
sand and stone
Burkha and bazooka.

What is it you saw or didn't see
before dropping terror on that innocent country,
sitting in a tavern on that Friday night,
if you can remember the tavern
or the night for that matter,
planning everyone else's life.
It was the night before giving the orders:
GO TO WAR! KEEP THE PEACE!

You thought you were protecting
the world from terrorists,
forcing your democracy on
Allah Akbar,
inflaming the Arab Fatwah
captured on Al Gazirah.

George!!

Believe me when I say
you won't be remembered for your vision
as Commander in Chief
of the US Military and Coalition of the Willing.

You think you are every man
and all men, except the French
whom you now despise,
so I guess you will never come
across Voltaire who wrote about you
200 years ago when he said:

**"Every man is guilty of the good
he did not do"**

Letter Home from a Body Bag

This is my last letter home,
just enough time to say goodbye
to dad and mom, all my friends,
roses in the hedge,
the street corner poet selling words,
the street corner church selling words,
the street walker selling words.

This is to be my last letter home,
to Tom, Dick, Sally, Fred, Spot and Sue.
If I could only be there to see the looks
on their faces but I'm going to war
and they wouldn't recognize me
or my street corner face.
My camouflaged face.

This should be my last letter home,
where in my old bedroom sat my trunk
filled with old letters, old dreams,
uniform and ammo case, journals.
No one will read them because I never
sparked a magic fire in their hearts
strong enough to melt the stones and ice
in their illiterate minds

Is this my last letter home,
where, when I was there, the light was on,
the day I ran away to join the war.
Reach out and read me.
Read my books, plays, poetry,
never more those false smiles when I call.

This is to be my last letter home,
one copy to you, one to her and
one to each friend who greeted me first,
smiled, saved a life, shared my feelings for peace.
Anyone who is better now
than when they started,
one to the clubs I belong to
and the ones I wanted to,
and maybe one to some of your friends.

This should be my last letter home,
to ask for love, world of freedom.
Can you say luck?
No, to you a soldier is a distant thing,

to me it's duty at all cost, people,
death, dogs, acid rain, diamonds in the rough.

Is this my last letter home?
You're damn right it is and you know it!
I've been hiding my feelings on paper,
writing between the lines of all my
poems, stories, plays, trying to reach only you.
Wanting you to say, I understand...
I know I understand you... really I do.

YOU'LL COME TO MY GRAVE STONE
WHERE I WILL FOREVER BE ALONE
HOLDING THIS LETTER
BROUGHT FROM HOME
STILL THINKING IT'S ONLY ANOTHER POEM

Back at the Post Office in London

(January 2004)

Over the years, sitting,
sorting mail at the Post Office in London,
looking, at the postcards, dwelling,
on peoples lives and thoughts,
I see the same thing every day.
A single line stroked through
an address, "deceased",
written upon it by the letter carrier.
Five days before New Years,
seven million letters this Christmas,
thinking about him this season.
One letter out of how many?
One letter in an unknown hand.
One damn piece of paper, my hand
shaking, gasped breathing, never
a vision until now, one damn letter
in shaking penmanship written
beside the crossed out address . . .
my dad is dead.

Collaboration poetry with A.G. (2007)

Alice

Alice, I had a dream last night
that you wrote me a poem
and I woke up at 5am after
being out till 3am looking
for it in the dark.

I ran over to the computer
and in the early light
of morning read all my mail,
went through all my notes,
but your poem was not there.
Then, waking in your smell,
smiling at the memory of you,
I realized it was all a dream
but wondered why I was
laying naked on my doorstep
in the cold under the moon.

Your Love Like Balm

Drink in your love like balm
inhale your skin like ether
dreading what I know will come
kiss me goodnight and
like a skilled surgeon wielding scalpel
sever my heart
without scratch or nick
and I
long trained as your assistant
pocket my heart and go home
A.G.

What Would Be Better Than Loving A Mermaid

She floats beneath the surface
darkness deep-en-ing
wait with tide alone with moon.

Goddess of the sea
pale gray eyes and abalone
cry with tide moan with moon.

Fingers move with suck of waves
she craves a net to pull him down
lust with tide ache with moon.

His mouth against her aching deep
lungs on fire with captured breath
tongue so sweet and warm and wet
drowns with tide dies with moon.

A.G.

Response to Mermaid

Tongue in hand,
dreaming of your underbelly,
thong against lips,
beard stubble grinding
pleasurable pain on clitoris,
cock-hard little thing
waiting to vibrate over and over again,
searching for the mermaids hole,
sucking in under water, you
mermaid, breathe while I
practice drowning in your fluid love,
oblivious to the possible intrusion,
slip my hand down your jeans
to sample the other side of light.

How am I supposed to get any work done?

I may be small but I am a giant,
hunger and rage and beat at my breast,
thunder and storm lash against my legs
while I sleep, gnash my teeth
and rail against heavens
ache, and fail to
slake my lust for
carnal love.

A.G.

When I am alone

When I am alone
I a brazen woman fevered
eyes wide shut, you
hard spread me wide
your moth, mine babbling
bigbigbigohgod and come
but when across the room
think, who is this man and why
wanting aching to be worshiped heart in hand
feel novel kisses from questioning soul
taste new love with tired heart.
Heart trips a little at the door
press spine against steel
hard and cold
and gather my nerve
to go in.
A.G.

Pavlov's Dog

Slept in this Sunday Morning and
two or three vehicles drove down
the small dirt and gravel lane behind
my apartment beside my window.
Each and every time I thought
it was you pulling in to park, knock,
enter the darkened space I call home.
Each time a car rolled by I projected
an erectile under the covers and you
were not knocking on my door,
interloper of love, disquieter of quiet,
seasoned veteran of surprise visits.

In my mind I opened the door to you,
blindfolded your eyes, cuffed your hands
behind your back and pulled your pants
to the floor with my teeth, jammed
your hips between my mouth and the wall,
as the sixteen year-old punker chick from
the upstairs apartment came out of her door
on the way to church like a good little girl
and went down the lane with bad girl thoughts.

Hole In My Apple Jeans

Oh joy, oh bliss,
to wait on tender hooks,
to find you waiting and liking me.
You are the record-keeper.
Lust and tears are my constant companions,
my heart aches, is this being forty?
My sexual peak? I'm tired
and we haven't even started.
Put a hole in my apple jeans
for your finger should we hug
panty-less, find the tip of your hand
between my legs, I hug your arm,
grit my teeth and scream your name.

Oh God, oh God - damn
lust and your fingers cream
my apple jeans to sauce, hot
tree shaking, leaves shaking,
you melt down to your knees
and lick the apple of my love,
raise up and your rising
fits between my legs and into the
apple jean hole your fingers made.
Cock-lift me up to your waist,
arms around the door frame,
legs around your hips,
I shake and we kiss.

A.G.

Your Heart

I ache for you
your heart against my heart,
the length of your body on mine
nipples like pebbles as
your heart softens my bones
spreads me wide, fills every hungry crevice
cleaves me in two, then mends me
lungs bursting, coming up for air,
fill me so I can remember
what it's like to love someone.

A.G.

Did You Miss Me When I Was Gone?

Mr. Ray, did you miss me
when I was gone?
Touch pillow
where I lay
my head in your lap,
hands describing drama.
Did you miss me
when I was gone?
Things unsaid
crouch in
TV-lined darkness,
feel dull ache
as we parted.

Did you miss me
when I was gone?
Shadow of a kiss on
your mouth
wanting more,
tongue too guilty to ask.
Did you miss me
when I was gone?
Engine noise
fades away
down alley
to late-winter street.
Did you
miss me?
A.G.

Old Friends

We'll be old friends
sit in your tiny kitchen
drinking oolong
from the teapot I bought you
for your birthday
laugh uproariously at our own joke
share poetry and stories
while the cat purrs under the table
and your warm toe
caresses the naked arch
of my foot.
A.G.

I Don't Get You

I must admit
that sometimes
I don't get you.
We're not always speaking
the same language,
inhabiting Babel.
Sometimes the link
beyond lust
seems tenuous,
yet other times seems
more than enough.

I had deemed you unresponsive
again,
and being busy
had decided not to call you
until you responded to me.
I guess this poem
written by you to me
deserves some response.
Shall I call you
tonight?

Does this make true
the perception
that to lay with
someone you barely know
is unwise?
But the unknowing
makes my heart race
and my senses melt
remembering the touch
and your body
against mine,
and really
how would it be possible
to know each other
better
than I know you
and you know me?
A.G.

I Fantasized About You

I fantasized about you
with the long dripping muzzle
of a grey wolf, yellow eyes,
hungrily licking and licking,
nose up my little red riding skirt . . .
You could smell my desire miles away . . .
Dreaming under a tree in the woods . . .
And you woke me up with your tongue . . .
After all, isn't that what
little red riding hood is all about?
A.G.

Response to Little Red Riding Hood

Then I swept away that dream and flew
above you, talons exposed, hovering
like a banded grey hawk, eyeing
the raw meat between your legs, from high.
Thirsty and swooping in on your hot skin
I can feel the throbbing labia worm I desire,
clamp claws in your thighs,
tail in your screaming face,
beak ripping at your oval loins, little worm
torn from its hole, your eyes next to be pecked.

Look Toward Nine

Look toward nine,
drive towards you
on secret streets,
kiss you in warm light,
big strong man
to please me,
wrap hot tongue around you,
hold you in shivering ecstasy.
A.G.

Response to Toward Nine

Waiting in silent darkness, a
small rectangular window light
seeps evening in my warm room,
waiting in silent darkness
thinking of you driving here
to knock upon secret street doors
open to the cold cold air,
your warmth and sunlight melts
my heart, builds the heat
of penetrating cockiness I exude,
lifting you up, my mouth on yours.

The Back Of Love

I dream only
of the back of love,
end of all things,
darkest alley,
third door
where I shiver
under your power.

Yes, kiss me there
but don't linger . . .
Past the entrance
you'll find another,
you ask and
it will open
to your gentle
insistence.

Then,
tongue and mouth
on dry lips that should
never be kissed
I cringe with shame,
desire blooms like
a black orchid
and I stumble
heading for the fall.

I must admit
I don't dream
of your face
but your hands at my waist,
bend me forward,
teeth at my nape
and teach me
the back of love.
A.G.

Atlanta Poems (2001)

I Have a Secret Life

(for Billie Selman)

When I arise and dress in this
holy place near Stone Mountain,
I wonder why the past has clasped
your wrists and bound you to this place?

Goddess, Gaia, you are light
in this temple where you sleep
arms folded across your gentle heart.
At your feet I remain your servant,
yet hold the key to your salvation.
In a dream you see the answer questioned
as I rise from this place where you sleep.
That breeze you feel upon your cheek
my friend, is I, the sound of one hand clapping.

If I Thought That You Were Right For Me

(for Cris Original)

If I thought that you were right for me
and my mind was clear of debris,
how would I phrase this greeting and
how would the words maintain closure:
I don't know how much I like you.
I like you, how much I don't know
I know you, don't I like you much?
I like you, I don't know how much.
I don't know much, you I like.
I don't know you.
How much don't I like you.
Don't I like you?
I don't like you.
I like you.
I don't know.

It was easier to love you when I
didn't have to worry about liking you.
That distancing from home was easier
because of the unfamiliar faces of love.
Darkness veils feelings and amplifies sounds
the heart makes when laying on the beach.
Come to me my man in white
and kiss me in the morning light

come and sing and come and play
with you beside me shall I lay,
bring me flowers and bring me home
far from this place where I'm alone
I'll go to be alone again, to dream
my dreams of invisible men.

Barriers

(for Cris Original)

Well, that barrier is down
crumbled defensive walls
lay all around the campfire
and the loons evening call
closes the gap left open.

Time that once wounded all heals
now heals all wounds and
my arms like tree dreams
sweep away the downed barriers
that once separated our thoughts.

We nest on the beachhead
not far from the campfire that
burns brighter to heat up the night.

You Can't Go Home Again

(for Dinah Estes)

In the cool green Alabama April
while five birds of morning sing,
each a different song of spring,
I find myself in contemplation.

The past has come to meet me
while four birds of morning sing,
friends from my recent memory sleeping
came through the soft leaves, creeping.

The sun rose above the forest mantle
while three birds of morning sing,
songs of tears and memory deepening
while I try to remember everything.

Soft hand on my shoulder now
while two birds of morning sing
and the misted ghosts drift away
taking with them everything.

Quiet now on a friend's back porch
after the last bird of morning sang
and I awoke from restless sleep
older, wiser and renewed again.

London Poems (2005-2013)

Double Immigration

(for B. Usmanova)

Was it the words left unsaid that kept you laughing,
or the thoughts before the smile?
The mouth is blind as
the tongue speaks insights
into the thread bare soul
and we lay our lives out
for each other to see and taste.

After the dinner is done.
After the white wine sipped.
After the lips part language,
I am lost and found.
You are lost from home, that
double immigration
that brought you here, but
you are not alone, memories
and new friends in this new land
stretch a smile across your face.

The coffee is getting cold
while your delicate fingers touch the cup
that only thinks about touching your lips.
We finish telling each other stories
distracted from the truth.
Was it the words left unsaid that kept you laughing
or the thoughts before the smile?

Earth Songs, The Ontario Poetry Society, 2002

Covent Garden Market

I was thinking about the rain
and how noisy the Market was
in a quiet contemplative way
and feeling the loneliness of flowers.

Then like a full blown storm,
a Zen of synchronicity,
at least a dozen old friends
dropped by and made me realize
that inanimate though they are,
flowers are never alone and we are
all flower children in the rain,
huddled here in the market.

A thousand people reached out,
eyes closed to this field of humanity
and friends around us.

The Light That Lands: (for Lynn Pellerin)

There is a light that lands
at my footsteps as I wander
round this enigmatic world.
So bright sometimes AI cannot see.
So mellow sometimes I dream I see.
So clear sometimes I can see me.

The light that lands
at my footsteps is the Sun
and guides me through my life.

What really pushes me on
and keeps my soul in tune
is when I look up and realize
I'm dragging along the Moon.

Ted Plantos

Sitting here listening to Dylan
and thinking about what Plantos had said . . .
“Where are all the thirty-five year old’s now
that were like us when we were 35,
organizing and writing and protesting . . .”
as the ‘times they are a changing’
entered my nostalgic brain.
But now, I am just thinking about
where are all the friends now
that were with us when we were 35?

Ted Plantos has gone posthumous
and no longer in reprint, while
Valentine’s Day was unkind to Jones.
Concrete and taxis failed Shaunt
and Acorn has dropped from the tree
as the crows fly overhead, Gwendolyn..
Win won not long ago and
we have lost them and many more.

I have listened, I have heard
and soon I too must go
to sit on some old lonely couch
on some lonely porch, listening
to Dylan and thinking . . .
Where, my God, have they all gone . . .
Singing along with . . . ‘the times they are a changing’ . . .

Central Avenue Starbucks

Hunkering down in the plush seat
at the Central Avenue Starbucks where
there are too many young women in
black leotards and a few camel toes,
young men buy coffee and leave the
middle aged and older men sitting
in the plush purple chairs
sipping slowly their caffeine beverage
and remembering their own Barista youth
when candy was dandy but liquor was quicker,
eye level to those black stretch leotards,
running to the Sexionary to look up

the definition of a Camel toe.
Caramel spiced mocha truffle latte
just walked in behind me as a
grande espresso double foam coffee
hunkers down in the soft chair
across from me and wonders why
the young men aren't wearing tight black
leotards and then drinks her coffee
and remembers why!

Sweet Janine

Up until this weekend
I was sure my life was worth
more than twenty-five cents
as I rummaged through the books
at Merrifield's in Woodstock Ontario.

Did you associate the author
with a voice in the past, or
was he just another 5X7?
You looked surprised
when you smiled into my eyes
connecting author and name,
realizing they were the same.

Janine, my sweet friend.
You are the reason grown men smile.
Hold onto dreams, wonder what
has happened since highschool,
never imagined you older than eighteen,
the last time I saw you smile,
walk down the hall, talk to friends.

Please forgive my tears of joy,
memory of you in my heart,
thirty miles away for thirty years,
the sincerity of my arms hug,
thinking of you.
Sometimes you can never go home.
Sometimes you are already there.

Earth Songs, The Ontario Poetry Society, 2002

What if God Was One Of Us

Like the song says;
"What is God was one of us,
a stranger on a bus
trying to make his way home
on his way back to heaven all alone."
After: creating, destroying, flooding,
talking to Moses for forty days,
watching over his flock, guiding angels,
fathering all of Asia and a prophet,
and just being the great I Am,
He still has to go home alone.

He didn't create a brother and
he probably didn't think about a sister,
didn't make friends, all he had
around him, alone on the throne
were angels singing praises for a
few thousand years and when they
ceased to sing He says to himself
"I AM never lonely, but . . .
I AM alone, just a stranger on a bus
trying to make My way home.

The Speed Of Dark

thanks to katherine gordon

More often than not in dreams
I find that gravity impedes me,
changes the speed of dark and
hides my thoughts in the solar winds.
Every time I dream of bicycles and cars
leaving the road was not the problem.
Leaning on the pedal never helped because
everyone passed me along the way.
How can I not be in control of
every movement within my imagination?
In the Mobius of dark and light I
drift between spacial star gates,
impeded by internal gravity plating.
Snow dreams on the other hand are
Hell on wheels, no glaciers here,
every downhill race a winner,
living the Life of Riley more than once,
losing my inhibitions on an avalanche,
yearning for an Isaac Newton moment,
seeing the apple falling,
not being the apple falling . . .
Oh when does it all end and
when will it finally speed on by?
Can't I run faster, further, farther
and then awake in lucid dreaminess?
Nothing changes the speed of dark,
deflecting light into my nocturnal brain
and speeds up my imaged imagination,
changes the gravity plating within me
ever more often than not, in my dreams.

Dennis George

So long as children breathe
or eyes can see beyond life,
so long as adults grieve
my father has lost a wife.

More than this memory, Mother
for you were my slice of life
and there could be no other
to ease my pain and strife.

Neguesh Mother.

Paranoia

You know what's really scary?

There's somebody behind you,
No . . . Really . . .
There's someone behind you.

On A Day Like This

for peter stamm & k gordon

As the electricity went off
the emergency stand by lights
glowed in the dark.
One day when there are no people
left in the world to notice, there
will be stand by lights glowing
and the clocks on electronic devices
will continue to tell the time that
no longer exists, until the last
power plants have switched off and
the last batteries have run dry,
leaving a once vibrant ethereal Earth
orbiting at the speed of dark.

In Sao Paulo I Sat Down And Wept
for marcello

On the long road home
for no more could I roam
I passed a man soaked in red
whose face resembled the dead.
The cuts and bruises caught my sight
as I walked on towards the night.
He was on the long road roam
and not on the long road home.

I had wandered this mysterious Earth
so far from the place of my birth
and seen the misery of foreign lands
and here was this wounded man alone,
torn, dishevelled, bleeding to the bone.
Then I saw the shackles on his arms
and knew the reason for his harms.

I was neither sad nor happy going home
just relieved to no longer be on the roam
but as he came closer his eyes were clear
and in his stride he showed no fear.
His heart strong after escaping jail
the barbed wire had not slowed his pace
but caught his lips and pulled a smile across his face.

The Bus

for jaclyn

God, Jehovah, Allah. The true Trinity,
merged into one not by the believers
who were zealots in their own interpretations
but by those who see past the old ways,
the revenge, the hatred, the plague of locusts
to find the true goodness of those three religions,
to see the world from the eyes of a child.
Innocent of color, race, creed, belief,
who, somewhere, anywhere, everywhere
in this struggling, polluted, selfish world
wakes up her father in the dark night
on a bus on the long road home from anywhere
to somewhere and sees an old albino man
under a solitary ceiling light and asks
in every tongue of this earthly Babylon
as it travels over pavement, gravel or sod,
“Daddy, tell me, is that God?”

The Buoyancy of Salt in Muskoka

First spring tempest passing through
swells the storm drains to over flow.
Then while my mind soars southwest
to home, first real meal, daughters. I
Detect one of Mother Nature's mysteries.
All along the storm trench, seagulls.
Swooping, landing, eating grubs, waddling
everywhere but in the fresh rainwater.
Out my window not one single gull
ventured into the draining water trough?
Could it be the buoyancy of salt?
Maybe like the Inuit words for snow,
seagulls have half a dozen for water?
Then the clap of thunder and darkness.
I look out towards home and they are gone.

Related Book Reviews:

Going Down Goose Lane Toward Broken Jaw: Fredericton poems and stories,

by Wayne Ray (London Ont. Harmonia Press, 2005) 102 pp. \$15

ISBN 0-9688885-9-3

Review by Anne Burke for *Prairie Journal of Canadian Literature*

This collection is dedicated to Ray's workmates at 203 Waggoners Lane (Fredericton New Brunswick). Ray writes in the tradition of Jack Kerouac's "On The Road; fueled by Joe Blade's "Vagabondia". (Blades was once a neighbor, hence the allusion to his "Broken Jaw" Imprint.) The allusion to "goose lane" places the locus for these poems [and stories] squarely in Fredericton, New Brunswick. (Think "Goose Lane Editions")

In "Back at The Post Office in London", Ray uses the binary of macrocosm and the microcosm to great effect. In the macrocosm, by trade he is sorting the mail, when he comes across correspondence marked "deceased". In the microcosm, in this particular instance, it signifies the death of his own father and evolves into his grief, how he was notified when his letter was returned.

There is a noble tradition of poet bards at the Post Office, gainfully employed as civil servants, while composing poetry. Witness Archibald Lampman and the Nineteenth Century Confederation Poets in Ottawa. Ray contributes his unique perspective. According to David Fraser, who offers a preface self-styled as a "review", Ray captures the poet "as voyeurs, the lonely hunting of the heart." Ray decided to include poems written to him "by friends and lovers I met along the way." We learn this from the author's comments on the poems, arranged chronologically, which he wrote when he was transferred from London Ontario to Fredericton. Fortunately, he fashioned "work" poems not only about the occupation but about graffiti ("Banting Building U of T"), protest ("George! Poets For Peace," and the Community Health Clinic "Room Mates: Samantha and Jen S."). The metaphor for "Chess Board of Life" (Wayne is moving in 5 Days") also appears in "Queen's Pawn 2". Then "Romeo & Juliet: Prick of the Dagger" is an ode to "Sam's Knife Collection." He seems preoccupied with time (dates of composition are marked by day, month and year) and place, with friends, (Breakfast at Cora's"), at the tavern ("Whippitt Lounge"), and in the poem "In a Dream".

The poem "You Cannot Give a Heart That Has Been Taken" is a collaborative poem composed online. He describes the characters by whether or not they have access to the World Wide Web. This certainly is an interesting analogy, given that he works at a Canada Post plant; he still found time to use the Internet, a competitor, if not enemy, to the mail carrier.

His haiku were translated into Japanese and published by Mercutio Press in 2003, under the title "*In A Dream*". Ray is strong on portraying aspects of character, with stream of consciousness and plotlessness by design. However, the "poetry of the People" (of which Milton Acorn was fond and for whom, Ray published his last book "*The Whiskey Jack*" the year he died), offers a kinder venue for his talents than the challenge of fiction. Perhaps the term "prose" poems might be more accurate, unless the material can prove to be the makings of a more ambitious project, such as the novel.

Wayne Ray founded HMS Press (1982) and co-founded the Canadian Poetry Association (1985). Some of them are: *Tear The Rust Off My Heart*, *EOA: Prose*, *EOA Poetry*.

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Review by David Fraser *Ascent Aspirations Magazine* British Columbia

In the moving from one place to another, even if the transfer is only temporary, there is a fusion of the new and the old, the present and the past, and there is a distancing and a drawing closer. Wayne Ray, in his poetry and prose on a journey to Fredericton, New Brunswick in 2002 has created in his portrayed encounters on the road and in this new city a melancholy, yet hopeful feeling of distancing and connecting, and a sense of individuals searching and being in two places at once. The effects are subtle and lyrical giving the collection a variety of perspectives that are entertaining and thoughtful.

In the opening dedication, his haiku “in a dream/they become one/moth and flame” sets the stage for a Zen-like fusion. The following haiku allude to glimpses of place and relationships and we are drawn into poems that are full of reminiscences on love and relationships that were or could have been. There is an atmosphere of a dream in the re-creations, and the fragile vulnerability within the relationships.

In “Cora’s: At the Window, Behind the Pane”, the narrator is [at a table watching] catching a glimpse of a waitress dreaming, “lost in laughter” and wonders “where are you my friend”. In “Going Home” we get a sense of place, of the fall – the “Old Loyalist Cemetery” with its inhabitants covered with the season’s leaves, - a sense of things needing to be done, an impatience to be leaving but also a feeling of a beginning. In fact, throughout the collection there are comings and goings, leavings as odyssey that are both physical and psychological.

The poet as voyeur is at work here from his first watching the waitress at the glass of a Queen Street café, to observing a friend or a lover in “Cynthia Bachelor” at the mall, not approaching to say hello or goodbye but rather holding the image and her graceful face frozen in his memory. There is a melancholy longing in these distanced observations, in this “waking, wondering, wandering mind” that speculates “if...all you see is someone in the distance and your eyes say you wish it were me” in “What if...You Walk by Me”. In “Talking to Friends”, the narrator says to the person fixated on the Internet connections of chat room cyber-friendships “Too many months you’ve felt alone” and he stands behind her like a shadow wishing she’d turn off the monitor so she could see his reflection reaching out for her.

One thinks of the lonely hunting of the heart where characters touch and almost touch, connect and almost connect. Three friends at a cozy Valentine’s Day dinner – an odd number – sipping wine, dissolving the icing flowers of the cake in their mouths but it all ends with “we dissolve the petals on our tongues”, very sensual, “and go home alone”. In “Whippitt Lounge”, a rollicking romp of “beer sloshing”, “gyrating and groping” as in former college tavern days, the narrator is high on the moment and the memory, but wakes up in his own bed alone, “pockets empty” and we sense there is more of the emptiness lurking in the shadows. In the collaborative poem “You Cannot Give a Heart That Has Been Taken”, a great title, this theme of love and longing, memory and melancholy flows out in wonderful lines such as “gathering shadows about you to keep you warm at night”, “the drums of singers...wails the longing”, “thorns long ago tearing at the flesh”, “burning memory on my life/leave a sunburn on my heart.”

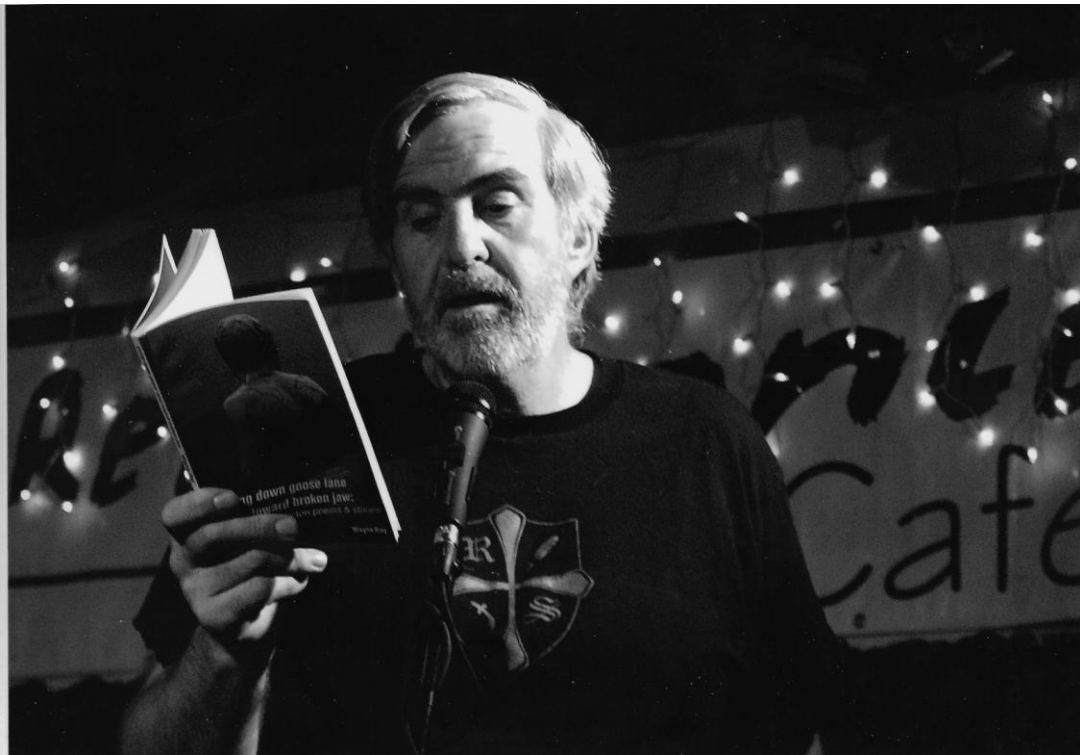
There is always the vulnerability in relationships, a sense of sacrifice as in “Romeo and Juliet: prick of the dagger”. It is the pain of love that is spoken.

“for daggers deep they have known
and sleep in quiet peace, together sewn.”

In “Not Looking to be Protected from Liking You” there is an irony in the title when we hear “I found you tearing down the heart wall to my house.”

In “Sego Road” the metaphor of the highway, the journey becomes linked to friendship and the journey of a relationship. Here “the signs are blurred on the other side” but on his side “your name and the/remaining mileage to your door” is clear. Other poems are more objective and allude to the war in Iraq, Princess Diana’s response if she were still with us, a rant to George Bush and a letter home from a body bag.

The poems in this collection are narrative reminiscences, lyrical meditations that illustrate an actual journey over a space of time but also an internal journey, a reflection that takes us “time after page” through pleasant and painful memories and re-creations.



Wayne (Scott) Ray was born in Alabama and spent most of his first fifteen years with his family on Ernest Harmon Air Force Base in Stephenville, Newfoundland until moving to Woodstock, Ontario in 1965. He became a Canadian Citizen in 1978. He lived in Toronto with his wife and two daughters from 1973-1988 when they moved to London, Ontario in July of 1988. Wayne is the founder of HMS Press publishing, the Multicultural Poetry Reading Series (University of Toronto), Scarborough Arts Council Poetry Contest, co-founder of the Canadian Poetry Association (CPA) (1985-88 Toronto & 1992-1995 London) and co-chairman of the League of Canadian Poets: Associates (Toronto) for 1985/86. He was co-director of the Beaches Poetry Workshop in 1983 and was the recipient of the Editors Prize for 'Best Poet Published in 1989' from Canadian Author and Bookman. Through his work with the CPA as National Coordinator, it was his suggestion that established the poetry section of The Literary Review of Canada in 1993. He was instrumental in helping establish the London Arts Council and was the President of the New London Arts Festival in 1999. He is listed in Who's Who in Ontario. Wayne has several books of poetry and non-fiction published as well as credits in; anthologies, periodicals, journals and newspapers across Canada between 1983 and 2014.